

relevant information is textual information.

54. (New) An image managing method according to claim 18, wherein the relevant information is textual information.

55. (New) An image retrieving method according to claim 27, wherein the relevant information is textual information.

56. (New) A storage medium according to claim 35, wherein the relevant information is textual information.

57. (New) A storage medium according to claim 44, wherein the relevant information is textual information.

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated May 29, 2002. Claims 1-57 are presented for examination, of which Claims 1, 10, 18, 27, 35, and 44 are in independent form. New Claims 52-57 have been added to provide Applicants with a more complete scope of protection. Claims 1, 4-10, 13-18, 21-27, 30-35, 38-44, and 47-51 have been amended as to matters of form and/or to define more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

The Office Action rejected Claims 1-51 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,032,157 (Tamano et al.). Applicants submit that independent Claims 1, 10, 18, 27, 35, and 44, together with the claims dependent thereon, are patentably distinct from Tamano et al. for at least the following reasons.

The aspect of the present invention set forth in Claim 1 is directed to an image managing apparatus that manages retrievable images. The apparatus includes input means and memory means. The input means inputs relevant information concerning one or more objects in an image. The relevant information includes an appearance quality of each of the one or more objects in the image. The memory means stores the inputted relevant information in association with each of the one or more objects of the image, respectively.

Tamano et al., as understood by Applicants, relates to a retrieval system in which two different images are linked. Tamano et al. teaches that, when an image showing buildings (first image) and a map image showing roads (second image) are displayed, a user can point to a building on the first image to retrieve stored attribute information (a road location of the building) linking the first and second images. (See column 4, line 26, through column 5, line 6.) Thus, Tamano et al. is understood to provide a system for retrieving information regarding an object, in which the retrieved information is relevant to (links) two unrelated images.

Nothing has been found in Tamano et al. that is believed to teach or suggest an image managing apparatus that includes "input means for inputting relevant information concerning one or more objects in an image, the relevant information including an appearance quality of each of the one or more objects in the image," and "memory means for storing the

relevant information inputted by said input means in association with each of the one or more objects of the image, respectively," as recited in Claim 1.

Although Fig. 5 of Tamano et al. is understood to disclose coordinate information of an object in an image, this information merely provides a position of the object in the image, and does not show "relevant information including an appearance quality of each of the one or more objects in an image," as claimed in Claim 1. The relevant information of Claim 1 would enable retrieval of, for example, an image of a cat on a table eating a mouse, as shown in Fig. 3, using the relevant information shown in Fig. 4. In contrast, the retrieval system of Tamano et al. is not believed to be suited for retrieval of an image such as shown in Fig. 3, and nothing has been found that would suggest to one of ordinary skill in the relevant art to modify the retrieval system of Tamano et al. to use the relevant information such as shown in Fig. 4 to retrieve an image such as shown in Fig. 3.

Further, whereas the apparatus of Claim 1 is directed to *retrieving an image*, Applicants understand the Tamano et al. retrieval system to retrieve attribute information linking two images. In other words, the Tamano et al. system uses images to *retrieve information*, while the apparatus of Claim 1 uses relevant information to retrieve an image. Applicants respectfully submit that the Tamano et al. system is intended for a different purpose than the apparatus of Claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claim 1 is not anticipated by Tamano et al., and respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e). Independent Claims 18 and 35 are method and storage medium claims corresponding to Claim 1, and are

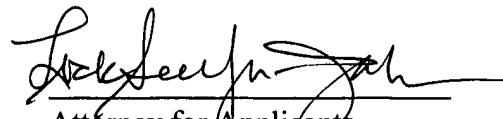
believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above. Additionally, independent Claims 10, 27, and 44 include a feature similar to that discussed above, in which relevant information that includes an appearance quality of one or more objects in an image is stored in association with the one or more objects, respectively. Accordingly, Claims 10, 27, and 44 also are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above.

The other claims in this application depend from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and, therefore, are submitted to be patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, individual consideration or reconsideration, as the case may be, of the patentability of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

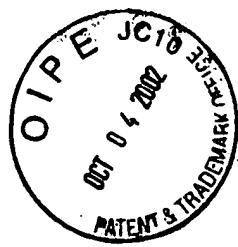
Respectfully submitted,



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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO CLAIMS

1. (Amended) An image managing apparatus for managing retrievable images, comprising:

input means for inputting relevant information concerning [each object] one or more objects in an image, the relevant information including an appearance quality of each of the one or more objects in the image; and

memory means for storing the relevant information [input] inputted by said input means in association with [respective] each of the one or more objects of the image, respectively.

4. (Amended) An image managing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the relevant information is relationship information expressing a relationship between [one object in an image and another object] at least two different objects in the image.

5. (Amended) An image managing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the qualifier is comprised of a plurality of words [can be specified as the qualifier].

6. (Amended) An image managing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said input means includes position designating means for designating a position of an object [of interest] in [an] the image [displayed on a display screen], and display means for displaying an input window used to input the relevant information concerning the object at the designated

position.

7. (Amended) An image managing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the position designating means designates positions of two mutually-related objects in [an] the image.

8. (Amended) An image managing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising retrieval requirement input means for inputting requirements for retrieval, and image retrieving means for retrieving images that meet the requirements for retrieval [input] inputted by said retrieval requirement input means.

9. (Amended) An image managing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said input means inputs supplementary information including at least one of imaging-related information of [an] the image, special object information thereof, category information thereof, impression information thereof, time information thereof, place information thereof, weather information thereof, and event information thereof.

10. (Amended) An image retrieving apparatus for retrieving images, comprising: memory means for storing one or more objects contained in [images] an image in association with relevant information concerning the one or more objects, the relevant information including an appearance quality of each of the one or more objects contained in the

image;

retrieval requirement input means for inputting requirements for retrieval; and retrieving means for retrieving [images] an image that [meet] meets the requirements for retrieval [input] inputted by said retrieval requirement input means, based on the relevant information stored in said memory means.

13. (Amended) An image retrieving apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the relevant information is relationship information expressing a relationship between [one object in an image and another object] at least two different objects in the image.

14. (Amended) An image retrieving apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the qualifier is comprise of a plurality of words [can be specified as the qualifier].

15. (Amended) An image retrieving apparatus according to claim 10, further comprising a position designating means for designating a position of an object of interest in [an] the image [displayed on a display screen], and display means for displaying an input window used to input the relevant information concerning the object at the designated position.

16. (Amended) An image retrieving apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said position designating means designates positions of two mutually-related objects in [an] the image.

17. (Amended) An image retrieving apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said input means inputs supplementary information including at least one of imaging-related information of [an] the image, special object information thereof, category information thereof, impression information thereof, time information thereof, place information thereof, weather information thereof, and event information thereof.

18. (Amended) An image managing method for managing retrievable images, comprising:

an input step of inputting relevant information concerning [each object]
one or more objects in an image, the relevant information including an appearance quality of
each of the one or more objects in the image; and

a storage step of storing the relevant information [input] inputted in said input step in association with [respective] each of the one or more objects of the image,
respectively.

21. (Amended) An image managing method according to claim 18, wherein the relevant information is relationship information expressing a relationship between [one object in an image and another object] at least two different objects in the image.

22. (Amended) An image managing method according to claim 19, wherein the qualifier is comprised of a plurality of words [can be specified as the qualifier].

23. (Amended) An image managing method according to claim 18, wherein said input step includes a position designation step of designating a position of an object [of interest] in [an] the image [displayed on a display screen], and a display step of displaying an input window used to input the relevant information concerning the object at the designated position.

24. (Amended) An image managing method according to claim 23, wherein, in the position designation step, positions of two mutually-related objects in the image are designated [in an image].

25. (Amended) An image managing method according to claim 18, further comprising a retrieval requirement input step of inputting requirements for retrieval, and an image retrieval step of retrieving images that meet the requirements for retrieval [input] inputted in said retrieval requirement input step.

26. (Amended) An image managing method according to claim 18, wherein, in said input step, supplementary information including at least one of imaging-related information of [an] the image, special object information thereof, category information thereof, impression information thereof, time information thereof, place information thereof, weather information thereof, and event information thereof is [input] inputted.

27. (Amended) An image retrieving method for retrieving images, comprising:

a storage step of storing one or more objects contained in [images] an image in association with relevant information concerning the one or more objects, the relevant information including an appearance quality of each of the one or more objects contained in the image;

a retrieval requirement input step of inputting requirements for retrieval; and
a retrieval step of retrieving [images] an image that [meet] meets the requirements for retrieval [input] inputted in said retrieval requirement input step, based on the stored relevant information.

30. (Amended) An image managing method according to claim 27, wherein the relevant information is relationship information expressing a relationship between [one object in an image and another object] at least two different objects in the image.

31. (Amended) An image managing method according to claim 28, wherein the qualifier is comprised of a plurality of words [can be specified as the qualifier].

32. (Amended) An image managing method according to claim 27, further comprising a position designation step of designating a position of an object of interest in [an] the image [displayed on a display screen], and a display step of displaying an input window used to input the relevant information concerning the object at the designated position.

33. (Amended) An image managing method according to claim 32, wherein, in said position designation step, positions of two mutually-related objects in the image are designated [in an image].

34. (Amended) An image managing method according to claim 27, wherein, in said storage step, supplementary information including at least one of imaging-related information of [an] the image, special object information thereof, category information thereof, impression information thereof, time information thereof, place information thereof, weather information thereof, and event information thereof is stored.

35. (Amended) A storage medium in which is stored a program for implementing an image managing method for managing retrievable stored images, the [program] method comprising:

[program coded for] an input step of inputting relevant information concerning [each object] one or more objects in an image, the relevant information including an appearance quality of each of the one or more objects in the image; and

[program coded for] a storage step of storing the relevant information [input] inputted in the input step in association with [respective] each of the one or more objects [stored in said storage medium] of the image, respectively.

38. (Amended) A storage medium according to claim 35, wherein the relevant

information is relationship information expressing a relationship between [one object in an image and another object] at least two different objects in the image.

39. (Amended) A storage medium according to claim 36, wherein the qualifer is comprised of a plurality of words [can be specified as the qualifier].

40. (Amended) A storage medium according to claim 35, wherein [said program coded for] the input step includes [program coded for] a position designation step of designating a position of an object [of interest] in [an] the image [displayed on a display screen], and [program coded for] a display step of displaying an input window used to input the relevant information concerning the object at the designated position.

41. (Amended) A storage medium according to claim 40, wherein, in the position designation step, positions of two mutually-related objects in the image are designated [in an image].

42. (Amended) A storage medium according to claim 35, wherein the [program] method further comprises [program coded for] a retrieval requirement input step of inputting requirements for retrieval, and [program coded for] an image retrieval step of retrieving images that meet the requirements for retrieval [input] inputted in the retrieval requirement input step.

43. (Amended) A storage medium according to claim 35, wherein, in the input step, supplementary information including at least one of imaging-related information of [an] the image, special object information thereof, category information thereof, impression information thereof, time information thereof, place information thereof, weather information thereof, and event information thereof is [input] inputted.

44. (Amended) A storage medium in which is stored a program for implementing an image retrieving method for retrieving stored images, the [program] method comprising:

[program coded for] a storage step of storing one or more objects contained in [images] an image in association with relevant information concerning the one or more objects, the relevant information including an appearance quality of each of the one or more objects contained in the image;

[program coded for] a retrieval requirement input step of inputting requirements for retrieval; and

[program coded for] a retrieval step of retrieving [images] an image that [meet] meets the requirements for retrieval [input at] inputted in the retrieval requirement input step, based on the stored relevant information [stored in said storage medium].

47. (Amended) A storage medium according to claim 44, wherein the relevant information is relationship information expressing a relationship between [one object in an image and another object] at least two different objects in the image.

48. (Amended) A storage medium according to claim 45, wherein the qualifier is comprised of a plurality of words [can be specified as the qualifier].

49. (Amended) A storage medium according to claim 44, wherein the [program] method further comprises [program coded for] a position designation step of designating a position of an object of interest in [an] the image [displayed on a display screen], and [program coded for] a display step of displaying an input window used to input the relevant information concerning the object at the designated position.

50. (Amended) A storage medium according to claim 49, wherein, in the position designation step, positions of two mutually-related objects in the image are designated [in an image].

51. (Amended) A storage medium according to claim 44, wherein, in the storage step, supplementary information including at least one of imaging-related information of [an] the image, special object information thereof, category information thereof, impression information thereof, time information thereof, place information thereof, weather information thereof, and event information thereof is stored.